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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HAVANA 000081

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STATE DEPT FOR WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2017

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [CU](#)

SUBJECT: CUBAN DISSIDENTS LIVE UNDER THREAT OF DETENTION

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Buddy Williams for Reason 1.4(d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Cuban Government continues to use political detentions, and to a lesser extent violence, to punish, intimidate and silence opponents of the regime. On January 22, a youth activist was taken into custody and two other dissidents recovered from street attacks. Meanwhile, the regime transferred four prominent political prisoners from regular cells to the hospital wings of prisons. Another dissident described two years of hellish prison time he served after "disrespecting the head of state." End Summary.

¶2. (C) Human rights activist Wilson Cabrera Reina, a member of the Marti Youth Coalition and the Independent Teachers' College, was taken into police custody on January 22, ostensibly for residing illegally in Havana. Cabrera, an eastern Cuba native who has lived in Havana for five years with his wife, was an active participant in an opposition youth forum on November 24. On January 22, after police showed up at his home and took him to a police station, he launched a total hunger strike - not even liquids. Friends who appealed at the station for his release were told by officials of the National Revolutionary Police that it was a State Security matter. (Note: The regime is expected to deport Cabrera to eastern Cuba in the near future. End Note.) Meanwhile, two other dissidents reported being attacked in the street, in separate incidents, by suspected State Security agents using martial arts techniques. Ismael Omar Castellano and Jorge Quitusci both received head injuries serious enough to require medical attention. Quitusci's attack came seconds after he left the home of dissident Roberto de Miranda.

SICK PRISONERS TRANSFERRED  
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¶3. (C) The Cuban Government is transferring at least four prominent political prisoners from their prison cells to prison hospitals. Some are among the 75 peaceful activists jailed in the "Black Spring" 2003 crackdown. Julio Cesar Galvez, an independent journalist suffering from pneumonia and showing signs of psychological strain, was transferred January 22 from a regular cell at Havana's Combinado del Este prison to CDE's hospital wing. The same day, Pedro Pablo Alvarez, whose leg problems have rendered him largely unable to walk, was transferred from a CDE cell to the Carlos Finlay military hospital in Havana. At around the same time, Jose Ubaldo Izquierdo, an independent journalist who has hepatitis, was taken to the CDE hospital from a regular cell at Guanajay prison near the capital. Nelson Aguiar Ramirez,

of the Assembly to Promote Civil Society, is in poor health following three hernia operations. He was scheduled to be transferred from a CDE cell to CDE's hospital on January 26.

#### UNSHACKLED

14. (C) Antonio Vladimiro Rosello Gomez, a 41-year-old carpenter and unabashed dissident, has been out of prison for nearly eight months, but still carries the scars, physical and mental, of two horrific years behind bars. Rosello, of the November 30 Democratic Party, served two years for "disrespecting the head of state." On July 30, 2004, he was protesting an eviction and yelled, "Long Live Human Rights, and Down with the Fidel Castro Dictatorship!" Police took him into custody immediately. After being held without charge for one year, he was convicted of the disrespect charge in a three-hour trial. Rosello, whose ankles remain scarred from leg irons, spent time at the Villa Marista detention center and three Havana prisons: Valle Grande, CDE and 1580. His clavicle was broken at Villa Marista by a guard who didn't appreciate Rosello's refusal to eat. The bone was never set, and remains malformed. His head features a number of unresolved injuries resulting from blunt trauma. His face also tells a story. Two front teeth, one up and one down, were knocked out in separate attacks by guards, the worst at Valle Grande. Rosello vows to keep up his dissident activities "until Cuba is free."

#### COMMENT

15. (C) Multiple transfers of political prisoners are relatively rare. The death of former political prisoner Miguel Valdes Tamayo on January 10 brought negative press attention to the GOC. It is possible that the regime is moving to ensure that some of the sicker political prisoners receive necessary medical attention before they die and

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create a PR problem for the regime.  
WILLIAMS